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- [Home](#)
- [Search](#)
- [Support Forum](#)
- [Guides](#)

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- [Create an account](#)

3L Computers

Backing Up Computer Files (The Easy Way)

Friday, 25 June 2010 14:37

Some readers will likely wonder why I'm writing a very basic article, but I find the internet to be a hostile environment for people trying to get an honest answer with detailed instructions. I am also asked the question enough and I have not a clear single reference to tell someone when asked about file backup other than to say "Google it". So here is my concise answer on how I've approached the situation with minimal effort in printable format. Hang this guide on your wall, you'll have a backup in no time.

Beginner: Right-Clicking will get you everywhere.

"Backup" is a big fancy way of saying "make a copy". Copy your files to a second location every now and then.

The First Right-Click

Recognize the difference between shortcuts and actual files. Copying shortcuts for backup is useless if you are only concerned with the file it points to. **Right-click** on the file and check out the properties to make sure you are copying the right thing.

Here are typical results for what you will get with a Shortcut (left) and a actual file (right):

Shortcut on the left, actual file on the right.

Shortcuts have the shortcuts property tab. The shortcut will show you where the file actually resides. You will need to go to that directory to copy the files.

Click OK to continue.

The Second Right-Click

Find a location to backup to and make a backup directory. You will want your backup in a safe location so a different drive is usually best. For example, if you insert a flash drive or SD-Card, you should have an extra drive in My Computer or Computer(vista, 7). **Right-click** in an empty space and click New -> Folder. Name it something logical like "Backup 6.2010". It will be easy to recognize if you or an IT guy looks at it later.

The Third Right-Click

Select the files (left click) you want to copy. Holding CTRL lets you select more than one. Holding SHIFT lets you select from here to there in order. **Right-click** on one of them and hit "Copy".

The Fourth Right-Click

Find the directory that you want to copy the files to. Go into it, **right click** on some empty space within the folder and hit "Paste".

This works between files on a hard drive, flash drive, SD-Card, CD/DVD. Windows even has built in burning to disks so you can copy and paste on to a CD/DVD copy.

Intermediate: Use a Program

Windows has a backup system, but currently I prefer Fling File Transfer by NCH Software: <http://www.nchsoftware.com/fling/index.html>. Any decent backup software should work, but the one mentioned above has features that makes it easy to also transfer over a network and to FTP servers. It also immediately dumps you into a wizard to easily setup your first backup.

Note: You will want to turn notifications off if you ever plan on having broken links or no access to the source or destination files. This program will nag you if it can't copy.

Last Updated on Friday, 25 June 2010 16:04

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Website DNS Issue

Friday, 07 May 2010 00:40

Context: Early today I received calls from two customers who have websites and have their email provided through those website hosts. It seems the problem was with their ISP, Zoomtown and their DNS servers. Under Zoomtown, we simply could not access the sites nor directly access the email provided there. After changing many DNS settings without success under zoomtown boxes, I had a friend with InsightBB try the sites and they worked fine. Below is a work-around and can be used as a permanent solution if you choose to keep the settings. This simple solution can also be used for customers who have tried all other means to reach your website without success.

Issue: Website does not work on local computers, but seems to work for others on different connections or in other states.

Cause: The DNS servers provided by the ISP (in this case, Zoomtown) do not have the proper records to point their customer's computers to their websites and e-mail.

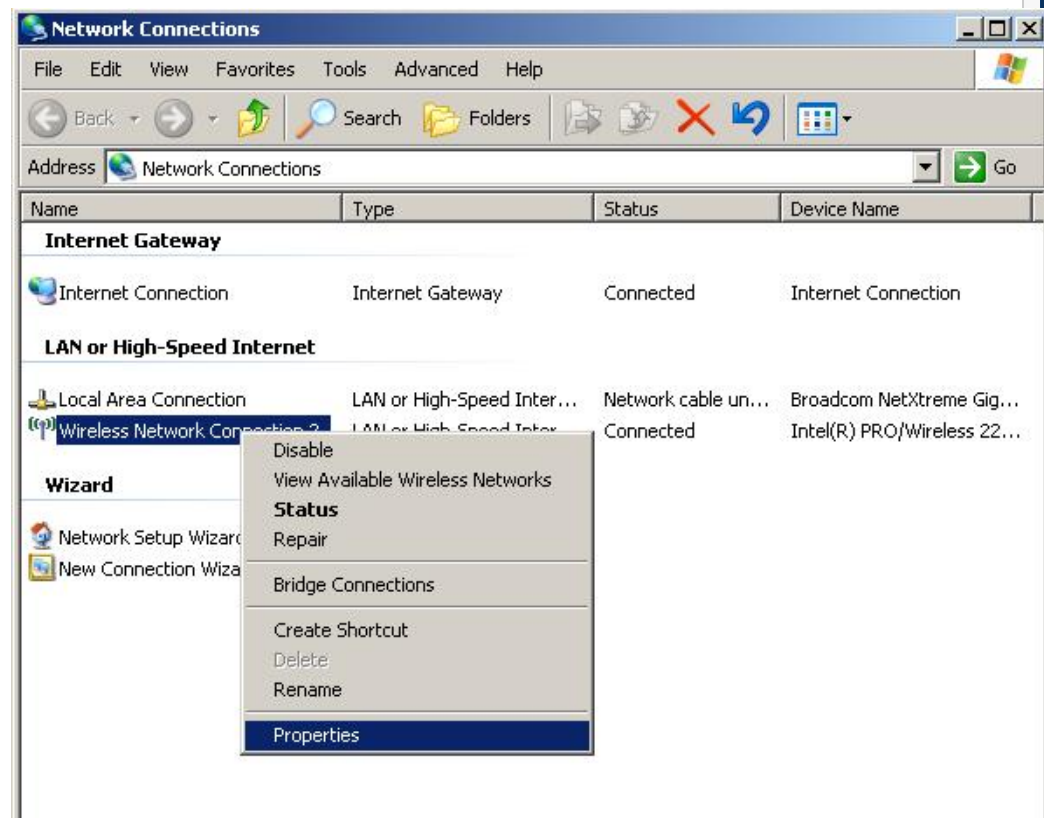
Solution: Change the DNS server. Google provides a public DNS that works just fine - it is free and can be changed in minutes.

Windows XP DNS Settings

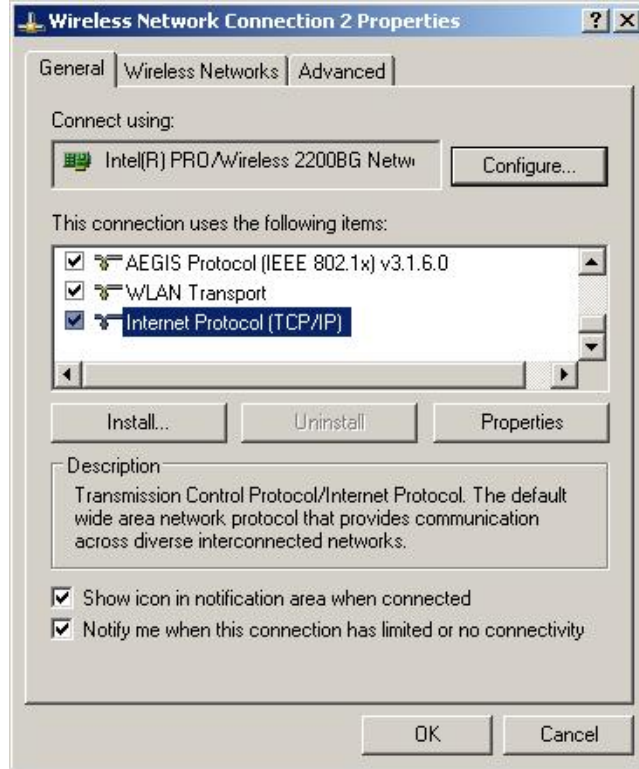
Right-Click on My Network Places and click Properties



Right click on the network connection that you are currently using (often labeled "connected") and click on Properties.

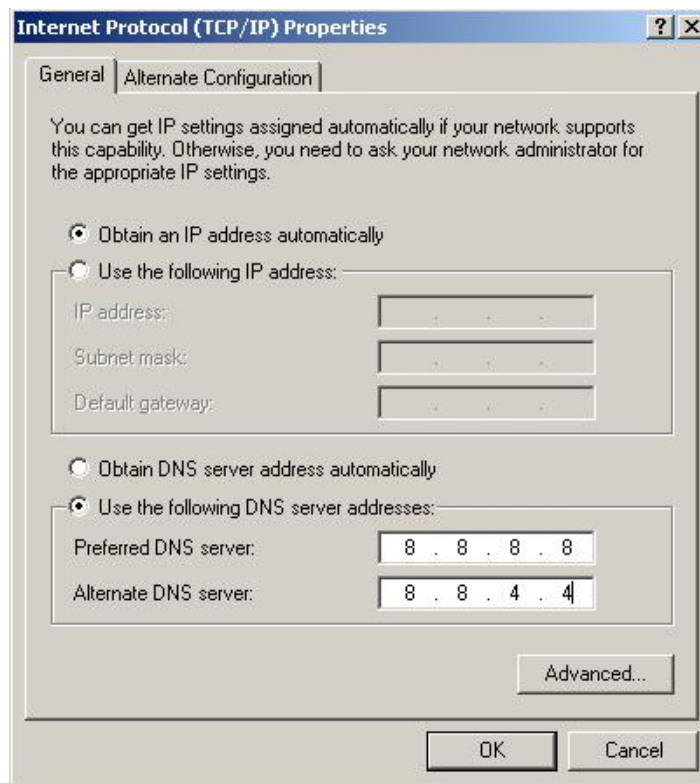


Find and select the TCP/IP protocol and click Properties.



Select "Use the following DNS server addresses:"

Change the addresses to a know public DNS server. The example here is a public DNS provided by Google. It should be good for a very long time, but if you have any doubts, search the internet for other public DNS servers.



Click OK and then try the website. This will not work if you change these settings on the wrong connection, for example the Wireless connection when you are actually connecting through an ethernet connection.

[Windows 7 Settings found HERE](#). Steps 1, 2,3, and step 6.

Last Updated on Thursday, 13 May 2010 23:47

Home server is down forever

Thursday, 18 March 2010 16:22

Internet in the United States is already expensive, but why stop there? Now I am told by Insight Broadband that it is not within my Acceptable User Policy to run any open ports for my HTTP and FTP servers. Apparently I can do this if I upgrade to a non-residential account costing around \$60. I only have non-commercial projects and files hosted. These include my projects, family projects, friends projects, and a whole lot of files I'd like to have access to at all times. I suppose later they'll tell me commercial things like selling on eBay and designing websites is against AUP (ssssshhhhhh!). I have to point out that if I paid an extra \$30-\$40 it still would not have

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any effect on Insight Broadbands liability, security, bandwidth, or otherwise; I don't need a static IP, I don't need a faster connection, I don't need anything more than I already have - no extra services need, only that you place my account in a special "leave me alone I actually use the internet" pile. All the files will be moved to the old softchip server which lives comfortably in my parents basement on ZOOMTOWN.

Also, if anyone knows how to legally bypass this problem, please let me know - I haven't studied networks and packet filters for a long time and don't really wish to again.

TLTR: Insight Broadband doesn't let you run any kind of server on a cheap residential account.

Last Updated on Thursday, 18 March 2010 17:10

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« Start Prev 1 **2** 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Next End »

Page 1 of 9